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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 001142

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [PHUM](#) [EAID](#) [PK](#)
SUBJECT: CJCS MAJID BRIEFS CODEL CARPER ON LATEST IN SWAT;
PUSHES FOR "POLITICAL SOLUTION"

Classified By: Anne W. Patterson for reasons 1.4 (b), (d).

11. (C) Summary: Codel Carper, accompanied by the Ambassador, met May 26 with Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Majid. Majid described his wish list for U.S. assistance -- precision-targeting weapons, more helicopters, and night vision equipment. The land push was going well, but the remaining house-to-house fight would slow the pace, he warned the senators. But "a political solution" was needed to bring peace, including an inclusive dialogue, even if the military offensive proved successful. The military would likely also need to leave some units behind to support the law enforcement and civil administration tasks. Despite the taliban challenge, which admittedly tapped into each locality's grievances, he assured the senators that a "handful" of militants would not take over a country of 170 million. This, and the multi-layer security umbrella, should assuage any concerns about Pakistan's nuclear arsenal falling into the wrong hands. Asked about Afghanistan, he doubly emphasized the need for the U.S. to make clear its long-term commitment, not just to the country but for the development of the people. End summary.

12. (C) Pakistan participants: Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) General Tariq Majid; Deputy Chairman General Raza; Director General of Operations and Plans General Qasim Qureshi; and Staff Officer Brigadier Imran. U.S. participants: Ambassador Anne Patterson; Senator Thomas Carper (D-DE); Senator Mark Udall (D-CO); Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH); Senator Kay Hagan (D-NC); Senator Mark Begich (D-AK); and PolOff Terry Steers-Gonzalez (notetaker).

"A Capacity Gap"

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13. (C) Responding to Senator Carper's initial question on how the U.S. could help Pakistan more, Majid was blunt in admitting the Pakistan military has "a capacity gap." He specifically requested the U.S. provide precision-targeting weapons systems, more helicopters for better air mobility, and night vision equipment. Only Pakistan's F-16s allowed precision engagement, he added. He also asked for help with the military's electronic warfare capability, pointedly asking for signals intelligence. However, "we are making do," Majid concluded.

14. (C) He was proud the military had performed as well as it has in the current Swat offensive with a cobbled rotary wing fleet of Pumas, MI-17s, and Cobras. The military had 18 Cobra helicopters originally, with 12 more refurbished and eight more anticipated. However, these were "old" helicopters without any night capabilities, weakening the

military's hand considerably, Majid argued. Though he had no complaints with his local maintenance infrastructure, he noted his helicopters were only 60 percent serviceable; after seven years of fighting militant pockets, the fleet had markedly degraded, he defended.

On the Ground

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15. (C) Majid reported that, as of May 26, the Pakistan military had six divisions (about 131,000 troops) stationed in the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP). Three of those divisions were directly engaged in the offensive in Swat, including five special forces battalions. Majid boasted that there were just one or two pockets of resistance left -- the whole of Dir valley was cleared; two-thirds of Buner district was cleared; and 70 percent of Mingora was cleared. His forces were entering a stage where they needed to link up with one another. Units were moving in fast from the east of Swat, while other units were moving forward from Bajaur to ensure the once militant-dominated agency remained in government hands and still others stood firm southwest of Swat to check the militants' retreat.

16. (C) Fighting would slow, though, because the battle was now house-to-house. "It will take time." Swat valley was thickly wooded, Majid added, necessitating an above-normal number of troops needed to be inserted into remote locations.

Peochar valley was an even more isolated, narrow, wooded valley. Asked if he felt the Pakistan military had "overwhelming force" on the ground, Majid was quick to

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retort, "We have an elite force." He noted that the terrain would not allow the military to push in an infinite number of troops; there was the risk that more troops would get bogged down. Majid here made a point of mentioning the 1,500 dead and 3,700 injured Pakistani troops since 2001.

17. (C) While many militants had been captured, Majid claimed, he also added that many also had escaped into Afghanistan. Some fled as fake internally displaced persons (IDPs). These militants' returning fresh for a fight was a major risk. He also described the political challenge across Pakistan's frontier because each local populace had its own reasons to join the taliban -- in Swat, they wanted to revert to the swift justice of the former princely state; in Bajaur Agency, the tribal families demanded "easement rights," which across an international border was actually illegal immigration and contraband smuggling; and Kurram Agency saw sectarian violence between Sunni and Shia, according to Majid.

A Political Solution

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18. (C) But the Swat operation's fate (and any operations to follow) would be determined by Pakistani public opinion, and that opinion hinged on the condition of the IDPs, Majid warned the senators. About 2.4 million Pakistani IDPs had been added to 1.7 million Afghan refugees, he noted. The GOP was already urging IDPs to return to those areas recently captured by the military. In the meantime, the Army would continue to control "militant spillover," recover areas one district at a time, and secure areas not disturbed by adjoining these hot zones. The public, so far, supported the military action, blaming the taliban for having broken the Swat peace deal.

19. (C) While Majid thought this military offensive was "going well," he quickly added, "Operations are not the solution." Hearts and minds would be won with socio-economic grounds, that is, the rule of law and basic services would need to return (or be provided for the first time) to these embattled towns. Majid predicted that some Army units would have to stay behind to support weak law enforcement and civil administrators. Moreover, while he was confident his

Pakistan military would clear taliban hardliners, whom he insisted were mainly foreign, peace would only come with "a political solution," Majid argued. The GOP would have to extend an olive branch eventually to open up an inclusive dialogue with many (recently) former combatants.

Nukes

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¶10. (C) Majid reassured Senator Hagan that Pakistan's nuclear arsenal was secure behind multi-layer, physical barriers, including 10,000 Pakistani troops. Moreover, nuclear material was subject to stringent controls and accountability. Intelligence assets were also deployed to protect the weapons and material from conventional or rogue threats. Majid concluded, "Unless the taliban take over Pakistan," there was nothing to worry about, quickly adding, "and a handful of taliban would never overpower 170 million Pakistanis."

With Afghanistan

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¶11. (C) Majid boasted a 10-fold increase in border posts along the Afghanistan frontier, now numbering 877, he reported. Yet these were not adequate for such a porous border. Prompted by a question from Senator Udall, Majid urged the U.S. to make a long-term commitment to Afghanistan. Like in Pakistan, hearts and minds "won't come with the use of force."

¶12. (U) This cable was not cleared by Codel Carper.

PATTERSON